**Pronominal Verbs in Compound Tenses**

In [compound tenses](http://french.about.com/library/weekly/aa102000.htm) like the *passé composé*, all pronominal verbs are [être verbs](http://french.about.com/od/grammar/a/etreverbs.htm), which means two things:

1. The auxiliary verb is *être*
2. The past participle may need to agree with the subject in gender and number

In compound tenses, the reflexive pronoun precedes the auxiliary verb, not the past participle:  
  
   *Elle s'est couchée à minuit.*  
   She went to bed at midnight.  
  
   *Ils s'étaient vus à la banque.*  
   They had seen one another at the bank.  
  
   *Après m'être habillé, j'ai allumé la télé.*  
   After getting dressed, I turned on the TV.  
  
  
**Agreement with pronominal verbs**  
  
When pronominal verbs are in the compound tenses, the past participle has to agree with the reflexive pronoun when the pronoun is a [direct object](http://french.about.com/library/glossary/bl-def-objetdirect.htm) but not when it's an [indirect object](http://french.about.com/library/glossary/bl-def-objetindirect.htm). So the trick is to figure out whether the reflexive pronoun is direct or indirect.  
  
**1.** For most\* pronominal verbs that are not followed by a noun, the reflexive pronoun is the direct object, so the past participle needs to agree with it.  
  
   *Nous nous sommes douchés.*  
   We showered.  
  
   *Marianne s'est fâchée.*  
   Marianne got mad.  
  
  
**2.** Likewise, with a pronominal verb plus a preposition plus a noun, the reflexive pronoun is the direct object, so you need agreement:  
  
   *Elle s'est occupée du chien.*  
   She took care of the dog.  
  
   *Ils se sont souvenus de la pièce.*  
   They remembered the play.  
  
  
**3.** When a pronominal verb is followed directly by a noun with *no preposition in between*, the reflexive pronoun is indirect, therefore there is no agreement:  
  
   *Nous nous sommes acheté une voiture.*  
   xxx *Nous nous sommes achetés une voiture.* xxx  
   We bought ourselves a car.  
  
   *Elle s'est dit la vérité.*  
   xxx *Elle s'est dite la vérité.* xxx  
   She told herself the truth.  
  
  
**4.** When you have a sentence with a reflexive pronoun plus an object pronoun, the reflexive pronoun is always the indirect object, so there is no agreement with it. However, there is agreement with the object pronoun, per the rules of [direct object pronoun agreement](http://french.about.com/library/weekly/bl-agreement-cv.htm):  
  
   *Nous nous le sommes acheté.* (*Le livre* is masculine)  
   We bought it (the book) for ourselves.  
  
   *Nous nous la sommes achetée.* (*La voiture* is feminine)  
   We bought it (the car) for ourselves.  
  
   *Elle se l'est dit.* (*Le mensonge* is masculine)  
   She told it (the lie) to herself.  
  
   *Elle se l'est dite.* (*La vérité* is feminine)  
   She told it (the truth) to herself.  
  
  
\***5.** For the following verbs, the reflexive pronoun is always an indirect object so the past participle does not agree with it:  
  
   **s'acheter**   to buy (for) o.s.  
   **se demander**   to wonder  
   **se dire**   to say (to o.s. / e.o.)  
   **se donner**   to give (to e.o.)  
   **s'écrire**   to write (to e.o.)  
   **se faire mal**   to hurt o.s.  
   **se parler**   to talk (to o.s. / e.o.)  
   **se promettre**   to promise (o.s. / e.o.)  
   **se raconter**   to tell (e.o.)  
   **se rendre compte de**   to realize  
   **se rendre visite**   [to visit](http://french.about.com/library/weekly/aa012601.htm) (e.o.)  
   **se ressembler**   to resemble (e.o.)  
   **se sourire**   to smile (at e.o.)  
   **se téléphoner**   to call (e.o.)  
  
**Key:**  e.o. = each other   o.s. = oneself  
  
   *Nous nous sommes souri.*  
   xxx *Nous nous sommes souris.* xxx  
   We smiled at each other.  
  
   *Elles se sont parlé.*  
   xxx *Elles se sont parlées.* xxx  
   They talked to each other.